

A Leader in South India Exhorts His Followers to Kill Brahmins

Nationalist Movement Contends the Top Hindu Caste Is Foe of Dravidian Life —Inquiries Begun on the Chief

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NEW DELHI, India, Oct. 25 —The Indian police are investigating the activities of a South Indian leader who looks like a kindly prophet and has been preaching murder.

For more than a decade, a saintly looking, white-bearded

man called E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker has been leading a southern nationalist movement that has selected India's top Hindu caste—the Brahmins—as its special scapegoat.

The cornerstone of the movement is the belief that the original Dravidian inhabitants of South India were conquered and exploited by invaders from the north led by the Brahmins. The propaganda of the Dravidian Society has been that ever since the invasion the Brahmins have twisted and perverted the religion and culture of the Dravidians.

"E. V. R." and his followers have never been able to gain political power in the south but they have carried out a series of violent propaganda stunts that periodically stun the nation. They have ranged from the beating up of Brahmin priests and painting out of restaurant and hotel signs carrying the word Brahmin to the burning of the national flag and hot denunciations of Mohandas K. Gandhi as a "traitor and cheat."

E. V. R.'s fierce anti-Brahminism does strike a chord of sympathy among those South-

erners who resent the influence and prestige of the Brahmins and their hold over Hindu religious life. But his movement has remained a minority movement of fanatics, not a powerful popular development.

But reports of the latest statements of the 79-year-old leader have made him of special interest to the Federal and Madras state police.

Speaking Oct. 20 at a birthday celebration in his honor in a Madras town, he was reported to have urged his followers to give him a special birthday present—the death of Brahmins. He said Brahmin-killing was a step in the direction of caste abolition. He said, according to press reports, that it was no sin because the old Hindu epics say that the Brahmins themselves went in for mass demon-killing.

The Madras state government has asked for an investigation of the Dravidian leader's remarks. In New Delhi, it was learned that officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs were conducting their own investigations.

An official here said that if it was found that reports of the Dravidian leader's incitement to kill Brahmins were true, he could be jailed under a preventive detention act. Under the act the Government can arrest persons accused of threatening the security of the state without presenting charges or evidence.